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Translations and Reprints

FROM THE

Original Sources of European History

MONASTIC TALES OF THE XIII. CENTURY.

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THE use by readers and students of those original documents from which our knowledge of history is so largely drawn has come to be valued in recent times at something like its true worth. The sequence of past events, the form and spirit of institutions, the characters of men, the prevailing habits of thought, obtain their greatest reality when we study them in the very words used by the men to whom the past was the living present. Even historians who have not been characterized by a close dependence on the results of patient investigation of the sources have recognized the superiority of an appeal to original testimony. Mr. Froude says, "Wherever possible, let us not be told about this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak, let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinion about him." And in "Stones of Venice," Mr. Ruskin writes, "the only history worth reading is that written at the time of which it treats, the history of what was done and seen, heard out of the mouths of the men who did and saw. One fresh draught of such history is worth more than a thousand volumes of abstracts, and reasonings, and suppositions and theories."

Experience has proved not only that the interest of students can be more readily obtained through the vividness of a direct and first-hand presentation, and that knowledge thus gained is more tangible and exact; but that the critical judgment is developed in no slight degree, and the ability as well as the interest for further study thus secured.

The utilization of the original sources of history has, however, been much restricted by their comparative inaccessibility. A great proportion of such documents as illustrate European history exist only in more or less unfamiliar languages; many are to be found only in large and expensive collections, or in works that are out of print and therefore difficult to obtain or consult.

The desire to overcome in some degree this inaccessibility, especially for their own classes, led the editors of the present series of translations and reprints from the original sources of European history to undertake its publication. During the past year evidence has been given of the usefulness of the documents in several directions. Their most considerable use has naturally been with college classes. One or more of the issues has been used in thirteen of the principal Universities and Colleges. In addition to these and their use in lower schools they have been found to give increased value to University Extension courses and reading circles.

The extent of this use, with the generous support of a considerable number of general readers, has justified the editors in continuing the series for a second year, in reducing the price, and increasing the number of issues. As during the past year the publications will be in the three fields of English, Modern European, and Mediæval History; and will be edited respectively by Professor Edward P. Cheyney, Professor James Harvey Robinson, and Mr. Dana C. Munro. They will consist of translations of typical or especially significant original documents of those periods; or in a few cases of documents in English which are otherwise difficult of access.

TRANSLATIONS AND REPRINTS

FROM THE

ORIGINAL SOURCES OF EUROPEAN HISTORY.

VOL. II. MONASTIC TALES OF THE XIII. CENTURY. NO. 4.

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I. *TALES OF THE VIRGIN.*

In the popular estimation the worship of the Virgin held the first place. She was the mother of mercy, the intercessor. God, the Father, and God, the Son, might be wroth against men, but could not withstand the pleadings of the holy Virgin. To her nothing was impossible.

The impetus given to the worship of the mother of God by Bernhard of Clairvaux, had been increased by the preaching of his Cistercian followers and had spread to the whole church. In the XIII. century the people were taught the *Ave Maria* as well as the Lord's prayer and the creed. Attendance at church in her honor on Saturday evenings was prescribed by the Council of Toledo in 1229. The celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception was becoming common, although it was not recognized as necessary. In fact, the popular enthusiasm for the worship of the blessed Virgin far out-stripped the careful theories of the schoolmen as to the exact amount of reverence due to her (the *hyperdulia* of Thomas Aquinas).

In the following tales we find her commanding the demons, rescuing those who have done her honor and revenging herself on those who have neglected her. The last trait is especially instructive as to the attitude of popular religion in the XIII. century. When heresies were so rife and the church was in such sore straits, even the mother of mercy was compelled to exact sternly the honor due to herself. The last example illustrates the belief in the efficacy of the same prayer many times repeated (by reason of which the rosary came into use). In other tales we find the Virgin powerless to punish the wicked, because they pray to her assiduously.

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1. *VIRGIN SAVES MATRON AND MONK, WHO ELOPE WITH TREASURES OF MONASTERY.*

Jacques de Vitry, CCLXXXII, pp. 117 ff.*

A certain very religious man told me that this happened in a place where he had been staying. A virtuous and pious matron came frequently to the church and served God most devoutly, day and night. Also a certain monk, the guardian and treasurer of the monastery, had a great reputation for piety, and truly he was devout. When, however, the two frequently conversed together in the church concerning religious matters, the devil, envying their virtue and reputation, tempted them very sorely, so that the spiritual love was changed to carnal. Accordingly they made an agreement and fixed upon a night in which the monk was to leave his monastery, taking the treasures of the church, and the

* The editions cited in this pamphlet are: (1) The Exampla of Jacques de Vitry, edited by Thomas Frederick Crane, M. A., published for the Folk Lore Society, 1890; (2) Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis Cisterciensis Dialogus Miraculorum. Edited by Josephus Strange. 2 Vols. Cologne, 1851; (3) Anecdotes Historiques, Légendes et Apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'E'tienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIIIe siècle. Publiés pour la Société de l'Histoiré de France par A. Lecoy de la Marche. Paris, 1877.

matron was to leave her home, with a sum of money which she should secretly steal from her husband.

After they had fled, the monks on rising in the morning, saw that the receptacles were broken and the treasures of the church stolen; and not finding the monk, they quickly pursued him. Likewise the husband of the said woman, seeing his chest open and the money gone, pursued his wife. Overtaking the monk and the woman with the treasure and money, they brought them back and threw them into prison. Moreover so great was the scandal throughout the whole country and so much were all religious persons reviled that the damage from the infamy and scandal was far greater than from the sin itself.

Then the monk restored to his senses, began with many tears to pray to the blessed Virgin, whom from infancy he had always served, and never before had any such misfortune happened to him. Likewise the said matron began urgently to implore the aid of the blessed Virgin whom, constantly, day and night, she was accustomed to salute and to kneel in prayer before her image. At length, the blessed Virgin very irate, appeared and after she had upbraided them severely, she said, "I am able to obtain the remission of your sins from my son, but what can I do about such an awful scandal? For you have so befouled the name of religious persons before all the people, that in the future no one will trust them. This is an almost irremediable damage."

Nevertheless the pious Virgin, overcome by their prayers, summoned the demons, who had caused the deed, and enjoined upon them that, as they had caused the scandal to religion, they must bring the infamy to an end. Since, indeed, they were not able to resist her commands, after much anxiety and various conferences they found a way to remove the infamy. In the night they placed the monk in his church and repairing the broken receptacle as it was before, they placed the treasure in it. Also they closed and locked the chest which the matron had opened and replaced the money in it. And they set the woman in her room and in the place where she was accustomed to pray by night.

When, moreover, the monks found the treasure of their house and the monk, who was praying to God just as he had been accustomed to do; and the husband saw his wife and the treasure; and they found the money just as it had been before, they became stupefied and wondered. Rushing to the prison they saw the monk and the woman in fetters just as they had left them. For one of the demons was seen by them transformed into the likeness of a monk and another into the likeness of a woman. When all in the whole city had come together to see the mir-

acle, the demons said in the hearing of all, "Let us go, for sufficiently have we deluded these people and caused them to think evil of religious persons." And, saying this, they suddenly disappeared. Moreover all threw themselves at the feet of the monk and of the woman and demanded pardon.

Behold how great infamy and scandal and how inestimable damage the devil would have wrought against religious persons, if the blessed Virgin had not aided them.

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2. *VIRGIN TAKES THE PLACE OF NUN, WHO HAS FLED FROM THE CONVENT.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Distinctio VII, Cap. XXXIV. Vol. II, pp. 42-43.

Not many years ago, in a certain monastery of nuns, of which I do not know the name, there lived a virgin, named Beatrix. She was beautiful in form, devout in mind, and most fervent in the service of the mother of God. As often as she could offer to the Virgin special prayers and supplications, she held them for her dearest delight. In truth, being made custodian, she did this more devoutly and more freely.

A certain clerk, seeing and desiring her, began to tempt her. When she spurned the words of lust, and he insisted so much the more strenuously, the old serpent enkindled her breast so vehemently, that she was not able to bear the flames of love. Finally, approaching the altar of the blessed Virgin, the patroness of the oratory, she spoke thus: "My lady, I have served thee as devoutly as I could. Behold, I resign thy keys to thee. I am not able any longer to withstand the temptations of the flesh." And, placing the keys on the altar, she followed the clerk secretly.

When that wretched man had corrupted her, he abandoned her after a few days. Since she had no means of living and blushed to return to the convent, she led a life of shame. After she had publicly continued in that vice for fifteen years, she came, one day, in a lay habit, to the door of the monastery. She said to the doorkeeper, "Did you know Beatrix, formerly custodian of this oratory?" He replied, "Certainly, I knew her. For she is an honest and holy woman, and from infancy even to the present day she has remained in this monastery without complaint." When she hearing the man's words, but not understanding them, wished to go away, the mother of mercy appeared to her in her well-known image and said, "During the fifteen years of

your absence, I have filled your office. Now return to your place and do penance; for no man knows of your departure." In fact, in the form and dress of that woman, the mother of God had performed the duties of custodian. Beatrix entered at once and returned thanks as long as she lived, revealing through confession what had been done for her.

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3. *A WOMAN IS PUNISHED FOR DESPISING A STATUE OF THE VIRGIN.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. VII, Cap. XLIV. Vol. II, pp. 62–63.

In the chapel of the castle of Veldenz there is a certain ancient statue of the blessed Virgin, holding her son in her bosom. This statue is, indeed, not very well made, but is endowed with great virtue. A certain matron of this castle—which is situated in the diocese of Trier—standing in the chapel, one day, looked at the image and despising the workmanship, said, "Why does this old rubbish stand here?"

The blessed Virgin, the mother of mercy, not, as I think, complaining to her son of the woman who spoke so foolishly, but predicting the future penalty for the crime to a certain other matron, said, "Because that lady"—designating her by name—"called me old rubbish, she shall always be wretched as long as she lives."

After a few days that lady was driven out by her own son from all her possessions, and up to the present day, she begs wretchedly enough, suffering the punishment for her foolish speech. Behold, how the blessed Virgin loves and honors those who love her, and punishes and humbles those who despise her.

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4. *HORRIBLE DEATH OF A BLASPHEMER OF THE VIRGIN.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 133, p. 113.

Also near Cluny it happened recently,—namely, in the year of our Lord 1246, when I was there,—that I heard from several how a certain tavern keeper on the Saturday before Advent, in selling wine and taking his pay, blasphemed Christ during the whole day. But when about the ninth hour, in the presence of a multitude of men, he had sworn by the tongue of the blessed Virgin, by blaspheming her he lost the use of his tongue; and by speaking basely of her, suddenly stricken he fell dead, in the presence of the multitude.

5. *A ROBBER IS DELIVERED FROM HANGING, BECAUSE OF HIS PRAYERS TO THE VIRGIN.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 119, p. 103.

Also it is read that a certain robber had this much of good in him, that he always fasted on bread and water on the vigils of the blessed Mary. And when he went forth to steal, he always said, "*Ave Maria,*" asking her not to permit him to die in that sin. When, however, he was captured and hung, he remained there three days and could not die. Then he called out to the passers by, that they should summon a priest to him. When the priest came and the prefect and others, the robber was removed from the gallows, and said that a most beautiful virgin had held him up by his feet during the three days. Promising reform, he was let go free.

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6. *THE DEVIL THWARTED BY PRAYERS TO THE VIRGIN.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 129, p. 110.

Also it is said that there was a certain knight, lord of a castle in Auvergne, whom the devil served in human form for twelve years. He wanted to carry the knight off, if he should find him at any time unfortified, on account of crime. When this was revealed to a certain holy man, he approached the castle, saying that he wished to speak with the servants. When, moreover, the devil seeing the holy man, wanted to run and hide, the latter had him summoned, and adjured him to say what he wanted and who he was. He replied that he was the devil and that he had been waiting twelve years for a chance to carry off that lord. But he was not able to do so, because seven times each day the lord with bent knees saluted the Virgin, and said the "*Pater noster*" seven times. Adjured in the name of the blessed Virgin, he left the foul corpse in which he was and fled.

II. *TALES OF THE DEVIL.*

The mediæval devil is a most interesting personage. He is ubiquitous and apparently always on the watch to aid in evil doing. Yet when he has entered into the body of a person, he proceeds to denounce his own followers, by revealing their secret sins. He seems to be almost omnipotent, yet there are certain limits which he cannot exceed and he can be routed by a simple *Ave Maria.* He is frequently

employed as an agent of God or in the service of some saint. Although the father of lies, he must tell the truth when properly adjured. Although the arch deceiver, he can be easily deceived and hoodwinked. His demons have the same inconsistencies as he. They love jokes and laugh heartily at each other's misfortunes. A large proportion of all the sermon stories are concerned with the instrumentality of the devil.

The first tale illustrates the readiness of the devil to take advantage of the least word. The second shows the devil undergoing punishment. The last brings out the popular belief that all heretics were necessarily emissaries of the devil. A knowledge of this belief is essential to a clear understanding of the general attitude toward heretics. If they led moral lives it was simply due to the wiles of the devil, who simulated virtues in order to deceive the more grossly.

1. *THE DEVIL CONFESSES THAT HE ENTERED A WOMAN, BECAUSE SHE WAS DELIVERED TO HIM BY HER HUSBAND.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. V. Cap XI. Vol. I, p. 291.

When our abbot was celebrating mass last year on the Mount of the Holy Saviour near Aachen, a possessed woman was brought to him after the mass. When he read the gospel lesson concerning the ascension over her head and at these words, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," he placed his hands upon her head, the devil gave such a horrible roar that we were all terrified. Adjured to depart, he replied, "The Most High does not wish it yet." When asked in what manner he entered, he would not reply, nor would he permit the woman to reply. Afterward she confessed that when her husband in anger said, "Go to the devil!" she felt the latter enter through her ear. Moreover that woman was from the province of Aachen and very well known.

2. *THE DEVIL CARRIES A KNIGHT FROM THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS IN INDIA TO HIS OWN COUNTRY.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. VIII, Cap. LIX. Vol. II, pp. 131, ff.

In a village which is called Holenbach, there lived a certain knight named Gerard. His grandsons are still living and hardly a man can be found in that village who does not know the miracle which I am going to tell about him. He loved St. Thomas the apostle so ardently and honored him so especially, above the other saints, that he never refused any pauper seeking alms in the name of that apostle. Moreover he was accustomed to offer to the saint many private services, such as prayers, fasts and the celebration of masses.

One day, by the permission of God, the devil, the enemy of all good men, knocking at the knight's gate, in the form and dress of a pilgrim, sought hospitality in the name of St. Thomas. He was admitted with all haste, and since it was chilly and he pretended to be catching cold, Gerard gave to him his own fur cape, which was not badly worn, to cover himself with when he went to bed. When the next morning he who had seemed a pilgrim did not appear, and the cape was sought and not found, his wife in anger said to the knight, "You have often been deceived by wanderers of this kind and yet you persist in your superstition." But he replied calmly, "Do not be disturbed, St. Thomas will certainly make good this loss to us."

The devil did this in order to provoke the knight to impatience on account of the loss of his cape, and to extinguish in his heart his love for the apostle. But what the devil had prepared for his destruction redounded to the glory of the knight. By it the latter was incited the more strongly; the former was confused and punished. For after a little time Gerard wanted to go to the abode of St. Thomas, and when he was all ready to start, he broke a gold ring into two pieces before the eyes of his wife, and joining them together in her presence, gave one piece to her and kept the other himself, saying, "You ought to trust this token. Moreover, I ask you to wait five years for my return, and after that you can marry anyone you please." And she promised.

He went on a very long journey and at length with great expense and very great labor, reached the city of St. Thomas the apostle. There he was saluted most courteously by the citizens, and received with as great kindness as if he had been one of them and well known to them. Ascribing that favor to the blessed apostle, he entered the oratory, and in prayer he commended himself, his wife, and all his possessions to the saint. After this, remembering the limit fixed, and thinking that the five years ended on that very day, he groaned and said, "Alas! my wife will now marry some other man." God had delayed his journey on account of what is to follow.

When the knight looked around in sorrow, he saw the above-mentioned demon walking about in his cape, and the devil said, "Do you know me, Gerard?" He said, "No, I do not know you, but I know my cape." The devil replied, "I am the one who sought hospitality from you in the name of the apostle; and I carried off your cape, for which I have been severely punished." And he added, "I am the devil, and I am commanded to carry you back to your own house before nightfall, because your wife has married another man and is now sitting with him

at the wedding banquet." Taking him up, the devil crossed in part of a day from India to Germany, from the east to the west, and about twilight placed him in his own house without injury.

He, entering his own house like a stranger, saw his own wife eating with her husband. Drawing near, in her sight he drew out the half of the ring and sent it to her in a cup. When she saw it, she immediately took out her half and joining it to the part given to her, she recognized him as her husband. Immediately jumping up, she rushed to embrace him, proclaiming that he was her husband, Gerard, and saying good-bye to her new husband. Nevertheless, out of courtesy Gerard kept the latter with him that night.

In this as in the preceding miracle, it is sufficiently evident how much the blessed apostles love and glorify those who love them.

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3. *TWO HERETICS WORK MIRACLES BY THE AID OF THE DEVIL.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. V, Cap. XVIII. Vol. I, pp. 296, ff.

Two men simply clad, but not without guile, not birds but ravening wolves, came to Besançon, feigning the greatest piety. They were pale and thin. They went about bare-footed and fasted daily. They did not miss a single night the early service in the cathedral, nor did they accept any alms from anyone except necessary food. When by such hypocrisy they had attracted the attention of everyone, they began to vomit forth their hidden poison and to preach to the ignorant new and unheard of heresies. In order, moreover, that the people might believe their teachings, they ordered meal to be sifted on the sidewalk and walked on it without leaving a trace of a footprint. Likewise walking upon the water, they could not be immersed. Also, they had little huts burnt over their heads, and after those had been burnt to ashes, they came out uninjured. After this they said to the people, "If you do not believe our words, believe our miracles."

The bishop and clergy hearing of this were greatly disturbed. And when they wished to resist those men, affirming that those were heretics and deceivers and ministers of the devil, they escaped with difficulty from being stoned by the people. Now that bishop was a good and learned man and a native of our province. Our aged monk, Conrad, who told me these facts and who was in that city at the time, knew him well.

The bishop seeing that his words were of no avail and that the people entrusted to his charge were being subverted by the devil's

agents, summoned a certain clerk that he knew, who was very well versed in necromancy, and said, "Certain men in my city are doing so and so. I ask you to find out from the devil by your skill, who they are, whence they come, and by what means so many and so wonderful miracles are wrought by them. For it is impossible that they should do wonders through divine inspiration when their teaching is so contrary to God's." The clerk replied, "My lord, I have long renounced that art." The bishop replied, "You see clearly in what straits I am. I must either acquiesce in their teachings or be stoned by the people. Therefore I enjoin upon you for the remission of your sins, that you obey me in this matter."

The clerk, obeying the bishop, summoned the devil, and when asked, told why he had called him. "I am sorry that I have deserted you. And because I intend to be more obedient to you in the future than in the past, I ask you to tell me who these men are, what they teach, and by what means they work so great miracles." The devil replied, "They are mine and sent by me, and they preach what I have placed in their mouths." The clerk asked, "How is it that they cannot be injured, or sunk in the water, or burned by fire?" The demon replied again, "They have under their arm-pits, sewed between the skin and the flesh my compacts in which the homage done by them to me is written; and by virtue of these they work such miracles and can not be injured by anyone." Then the clerk, "Suppose those should be taken away?" The devil replied, "Then they would be weak just like other men." The clerk having heard this, thanked the demon, saying, "Now go, and when you are summoned by me, return."

He went to the bishop and recited these things to him in order. The latter filled with great joy, summoned all the people of the city to a suitable place and said, "I am your shepherd, ye are my sheep. If those men, as you say, confirm their teaching by signs, I will follow them with you. If, however, they deserve punishment, you shall penitently return to the faith of your fathers with me." The people replied, "We have seen many signs from them." The bishop, "But I have not seen them."

Why protract my words? The plan pleased the people. The heretics were summoned. The bishop was present. A fire was kindled in the midst of the city. Nevertheless, before the heretics entered it, they were secretly summoned to the bishop. He said to them, "I want to see if you have any evil about you." Hearing this they immediately stripped and said with great confidence, "Search our bodies and our

garments carefully." The soldiers, truly, following the instructions of the bishop, raised their arms, and noticing under the arm-pits some scars that were healed up, broke them open with their knives and extracted from them the little scrolls which had been sewed in.

Having received these, the bishop went forth to the people with the heretics, and having commanded silence, cried out in a loud voice, "Now shall your prophets enter the fire, and if they are not injured I will believe in them." Then the wretched men, trembling said, "We are not able to enter now." Then the bishop told the people of the evil which had been detected, and showed the compacts. Then all furious hurled the devil's ministers, to be tortured with the devil in eternal flames, into the fire which had been prepared.

And thus through the grace of God and the action of the bishop the rising heresy was extinguished and the people who had been seduced and corrupted were cleansed by penance.

III. *TALES OF RELICS.*

Early in the fourth century, if not before, relics began to hold an important place in Christian worship. The number of relics, the miraculous power imparted to them, and the reverence in which they were held increased constantly. The crusades greatly strengthened this movement in the west of Europe. And especially the fourth crusade, in which Constantinople was captured. There the relics formed a most valuable portion of the spoils, and thence they were scattered throughout the west. The miracles wrought by the relics increased, and, in fact, many relics revealed themselves miraculously in order that they might be honored by the devout. The Mendicant Friars were the most instrumental in fostering the faith in relics.

In the thirteenth century, therefore, we find a large number of tales devoted to this subject. Most of them are evidently reworkings of familiar old tales, but all were eagerly accepted by the multitude. At the same time the more learned attempted cautiously to restrict the multiplication of relics. When men began to travel, and found the same relic—the head of John the Baptist, for example—in two or more places, they began to be sceptical. At the fourth Lateran (Canon 62) and other councils decrees were passed against impostors. But even the sceptical admitted that miracles were wrought by false relics. The testimony was too strong to be denied.

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1. *THE RELICS OF ST. MARTIN HEAL TWO BEGGARS AGAINST THEIR WILL.*

Jacques de Vitry, CXII, p. 52.

Moreover, although poverty and other tribulations are advantageous, yet certain ones abuse them. Accordingly we read that when the

body of St. Martin was borne in procession, it healed all the infirm who met it. Now there were near the church two wandering beggars, one blind, the other lame. They began to converse together and said, "See, the body of St. Martin is now being borne about in procession, and if it catches us we shall be healed immediately, and no one in the future will give us any alms. But we shall have to work and labor with our own hands." Then the blind man said to the lame, "Get up on my shoulders because I am strong, and you who can see well can guide me." They did this, but when they tried to escape, the procession overtook them; and since, on account of the throng, they were not able to get away, they were healed against their will.

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2. *THE ARM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST MAKES A MERCHANT WEALTHY.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. VIII. Cap. LIII. Vol. II, pp. 125–26.

Not long ago a certain merchant of our country, crossing the sea, saw the arm of St. John the Baptist in his hospital, and desired it. Learning that the custodian of the relics was following a certain woman, and knowing that there is nothing which women of that class cannot extort from men, he approached her and said, "If you will procure for me the relics of St. John the Baptist of which your lover has the charge, I will give you a hundred and forty pounds of silver." She, craving the money, refused to consent to the hospitaler until he obtained the sacred arm. This she immediately delivered to the merchant and received the promised weight of silver.

Do you perceive how great a mockery? Just as formerly the head of St. John was delivered by Herod to a lascivious girl as a reward for dancing, and by her was given to an adulterous mother, so at this time the hospitaler, no less wicked than Herod, gave the arm of the same saint to a base woman as the price of fornication, and by her it was sold to the merchant.

The latter, not consigning it to the ground like Herodias, but wrapping it in purple, fled almost to the extremities of the earth and arrived at the city of Gröningen, which is located at the entrance to Frisia. There he built a house and, hiding the arm in one of the columns, began to grow exceedingly wealthy.

One day when he was sitting in his shop, someone said to him, "The city is burning and the fire is now approaching your house." He replied, "I do not fear for my house. I have left a good guardian

there." Nevertheless he arose and entered his house. When he saw the column unmoved he returned to his shop. All wondered what was the cause of so great confidence.

When questioned about the guardian of his house, the merchant replied ambiguously. But when he realized that his fellow-citizens noted it, fearing lest they might employ violence against him, he took out the arm and delivered it into the care of a certain hermitess. She, unable to keep the secret, told a man of her charge, and he told the citizens. They immediately took the relics and carried them to the church. When the merchant tearfully requested his relics, they replied harshly. When they asked him of what saint these were the relics, he not wishing to betray the facts said he did not know. Nevertheless in grief he deserted the city, and falling into poverty he became very ill not long after. When he eared death, he disclosed to his confessor what the relics were and how he had obtained them.

When the citizens learned this, they made a receptacle, in the form of an arm, of silver and gilt, adorned with precious stones, and placed the relics in it. I saw the same arm two years ago, and it is covered with skin and flesh. I also saw there among the relics a small gold cross of Frederick the Emperor, which had been given to the above-mentioned merchant at the same time as the arm.

NOVICE: "Since no one of the saints is believed to be greater than St. John the Baptist, why is it that we do not read of any miracles in his life?"

MONK: "So that God may show that holiness does not consist in miracles, but in right living. For after death he was illustrious by innumerable great miracles. The aforesaid citizens, in truth, fearing for the relics of St. John, built of planks a very strong little house behind the altar, and by night they had a priest sleep in the top of it. The house was so shaken under him on the first night that he felt no slight horror. In the second night truly it struck him when asleep and hurled him onto the pavement. When one of the rulers of the city fell sick, at his request Theoderic, the priest of the church, carried the arm to his house and unwrapped it. He found the arm, as well as the purple in which it was wrapped, covered with fresh blood. He told me this with his own mouth. A priest cut off a small piece of flesh from the same arm, and when he carried it off secretly in his hand, he felt as much heat from it as if he had been carrying burning coal. Many miracles and healings indeed were wrought in that city by the same relics through the merits of St. John the Baptist."

3. *MIRACLES WROUGHT BY BRIDLE FALSELY CALLED A RELIC.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. VIII. Cap. LXX. Vol. II, p. 140.

A certain knight loved most ardently the above mentioned martyr, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and sought everywhere to obtain some relic of him. A certain wily priest, in whose house he was staying, heard of this and said to him, "I have by me the bridle which St. Thomas long used, and I have often experienced its virtue." When the knight heard this, thinking it true, he joyfully paid the priest the money which he demanded, and received the bridle with great devotion.

God truly, to whom nothing is impossible, wishing to reward the faith of the knight, and for the honor of his martyr, deigned to work many miracles through the same bridle. The knight seeing this founded a church in honor of the martyr and in it he placed as a relic the bridle of that most wicked priest.

IV. *TALES OF CONFESSION.*

The theories as to the necessity and efficacy of confession varied greatly. But the tendency to hold all Christians to a full confession of all sins increased, as the members of the church realized what a powerful weapon such confession would place in their hands. At the fourth Lateran council the confession of all sins to a priest was made obligatory once a year. Soon after this the formula of absolution changed from the deprecatory form to the statement that the contrite penitent was loosed from the sins which he had confessed. By confession sins, otherwise mortal, were reduced to the rank of venial. The two essentials were contrition and confession. If the first was present confession to a layman was sufficient in case no priest could be found. And, as we learn from Cæsar of Heisterbach, in cases when immediate confession was impossible, contrition alone was sufficient to loose from the consequences of sin. But confession must follow at the earliest possible moment.

The following tales show the efficacy of confession—even to a layman; the fact that all sins, even the most trivial, must be confessed; and the danger of backsliding after confession.

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1. *BY CONFESSION A GUILTY PRIEST ESCAPES EXPOSURE.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. III, Cap. II. Vol. I, pp. 112–13.

A certain soldier dwelt in a certain village, with whose wife the priest of the same village committed adultery. The soldier was told that the priest was carrying on an intrigue with his wife. He, since he was a prudent man and did not readily believe the story, wished to say

nothing about it to his wife or the priest, but to learn the truth more fully. But he was not without some suspicion. There happened to be in another village, not far distant from the one in which the soldier lived, a possessed person, in whom the demon was so vile that in the presence of bystanders he revealed sins which were not cloaked by a true confession. The soldier learned this from the common report and asked the priest, whom he suspected, to go to a certain meeting with him. And the priest promised.

When they had reached the village where the possessed one was, the priest conscious of his guilt, began to suspect the soldier, because he was not ignorant that one possessed by so vile a demon dwelt there. And, fearing for his life if he was betrayed by the demon, feigning some necessity, he entered a stable and throwing himself at the feet of a servant of the soldier, said, "I ask you in the name of the Lord to hear my confession." The servant greatly terrified raised him up and heard what he had to say. After the confession had been made, the priest asked that a penance should be inflicted upon him; and the servant replied very prudently, saying, "Whatever you would enjoin upon another for such a crime, shall be your atonement."

And so going on now in greater security, the priest went with the soldier to the church. There meeting the possessed one, the soldier asked, "Do you know anything about me?" For he did this on purpose to take away any suspicion that the priest might have. When the demon made some reply to him which I do not know, he added, "What do you know about that master?" The demon replied, "I know nothing about this man." And after he had said this in German, he immediately added in Latin, "He was justified in the stable." No clerk was present at the time.

NOVICE: "I am sure that the devil did not speak Latin of his own free will at that time."

MONK: "He was not allowed to speak German, lest the knight should understand what he said and learn the truth. And he was not permitted to be silent, in order that he might show to the priest the virtue of confession."

NOVICE: "Great is the virtue of confession which blots out the crime of adultery from the devil's memory and liberates a man from imminent peril."

MONK: "I heard also the result of this confession. The priest, not unmindful of the benefit conferred upon him, deserted the world and became a monk in a certain monastery of our order. He is believed to

be still living as I have learned from a certain abbot of the Cistercian order."

NOVICE: "The prophecy of that impudent demon was the cause of great salvation for him."

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2. *THROUGH CONFESSION, THE DEVIL'S RECORD IS BLOTTED OUT.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 176, pp. 155–156.

The manifold inconveniences and losses which our enemies suffer from the confession of our sins ought to incite us to confession. It destroys the devil's records. And note how, when a certain clerk was leading a most holy life, so that the devil envied him, the devil by tempting the clerk caused him to fall into grievous sin. When moreover the devil wished to confound the clerk, assuming human form he accused him before his bishop.

The day was fixed on which the devil was to prove his charges, by bringing to the judge his accounts, in which were recorded the place, the time, and the persons to whose knowledge the clerk had sinned. The said clerk, seeing that he was in hard straits, confessed all, grieving and purposing not to return to sin. When moreover they were in the presence of the judge and the devil said he had much against the clerk which he could prove by writing and witnesses, he unrolled his records and found all that had been in them erased. He said, "All that I had against this man was certainly written here this very day and I do not know who has destroyed it all." Having thus spoken, he vanished. The clerk, however, narrated all of these things to the bishop, in the secrecy of confession.

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3. *THROUGH CONFESSION, A FORGOTTEN PRAYER IS ERASED FROM THE DEVIL'S BOOK.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 177, p. 156.

Also it is related that when a certain holy father was at one time engaged with the brethren in some work, he forgot to say the none at the right time, on account of his occupation. Afterwards he saw the devil passing before him, bearing on his shoulders a very large book in the shape of a roll which looked as large as a tower. And he adjured the devil in the name of the Lord to drop that book. When he unrolled the book, he found written on one page that he himself had not said the none on the day and at the hour when he ought to have said it.

Moreover, prostrating himself at once at the feet of his companions, he confessed his negligence, and immediately looking again in the devil's roll, he found that what had been written there was erased, and thereby he knew the efficacy of confession.

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4. *A HERETIC HEALED BY CONFESSION RELAPSES AND IS BURNT.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. III. Cap. XVII. Vol. I, pp. 133–34.

In the same city, namely Argentina which is Strassburg, ten heretics were seized. When they denied their guilt, they were convicted by the ordeal of glowing iron and were condemned to be burnt. When on the appointed day they were being led to the fire, one of the attendants said to one of them, "Wretched one, you are condemned. Now do penance and confess your sins, lest after the burning of the body, which is only momentary, hell-fire burns your soul eternally." When the man replied, "I certainly think that I have been mistaken, but I fear repentance in so great straits will be by no means acceptable to God." The former replied, "Only confess from your heart. God is merciful and will receive the penitent."

Wonderful fact! For as soon as the man confessed his perfidy, his hand was fully healed. While he delayed in confession, the judge summoned him to the punishment. His confessor replied to the judge, "It is not just that an innocent man should be condemned unjustly." Since no trace of a burn was found in his hand, he was dismissed.

The man had a wife living not far from the city and absolutely ignorant of these things which have been related. When he came to her rejoicing and said, "Blessed be God who has liberated me to-day from the loss of body and soul!" and explained to her the cause; she replied, "What have you done, most wretched man, what have you done? Why have you withdrawn from your holy and sacred faith from fear of momentary pain? You ought rather, if it were possible, to expose your body a hundred times to the flames than once to withdraw from a faith so well proven?"

Whom does not the voice of the serpent seduce? That man, unmindful of the favor divinely conferred upon him, unmindful of the so manifest miracle, followed his wife's advice and returned to his former error. God, not unmindful truly of the crime, in return for so great ingratitude, tortured the hand of each one. The burn was renewed in

the hand of the heretic and, because his wife was the cause of his returning to his error, she was made his companion in the renewed pain. So vehement was the burn that it penetrated to the bones. And since they did not dare in the village to utter the cries which the violence of the pain extorted, they fled into the nearest woods, howling there like wolves. Why protract my words? They were betrayed, led back to the city, and together cast into the fire which was not yet fully extinguished and they were burnt to ashes.

NOVICE: "They were very justly punished."

V. *TALES OF THE HOST.*

The beliefs about the Lord's Supper were a matter of constant strife. In the fourth Lateran council Innocent III. gave ecclesiastical sanction to the expression transubstantiation. "The heightened conception of the miracle of the Supper" was marked by the "Adoration of the Sacrament." The rite of elevation, practiced by the Greeks and introduced into Germany in the first years of the XIII. century,—in use in France still earlier,—was made universal by Honorius III. in 1217. Naturally new attention was directed to the miraculous qualities of the elements, and the tales became more frequent.

No belief was too materialistic for the ignorant, miracle loving people. The bread was seen transformed into raw flesh, or it became a beautiful boy just as it was placed in the mouth of the communicant. The wine became real blood. To convince the doubting, visions like the one in the first example were common. The tales of the "bleeding hosts" had a different purpose. They were intended to prove the scholastic doctrine of "*Christus totus in utraque specie*," *i. e.*, that Christ's body must be thought of as containing the blood also—and were due in part at least to the increasing withdrawal of the cup from the laity.

The superstitious use of the host was practiced throughout the middle ages, but became more common in this century. Both the second and third tales show the nature of these superstitious beliefs. But the last shows also that even the least of God's creatures delight in doing reverence to the body of His son. Other tales might be reproduced showing how insects were punished when they neglected the reverence due to the host.

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1. *CHRIST IS SEEN IN THE HANDS OF A PRIEST.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. IX, Cap. XXVIII. Vol. II, p. 186.

In Hemmenrode a certain aged priest, Henry by name, died a few years ago. He was a holy and just man, and had been for many years sacristan in that monastery. When he was celebrating one day at the altar of St. John the Baptist, in the choir of the lay-brethren, a certain

one of the lay-brethren standing near, saw, in the hands of the priest, the Saviour in the form of a man. Nevertheless the priest himself did not see it. One of the elders of that convent related this to me.

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2. *WOMAN IS PUNISHED FOR SCATTERING THE HOST UPON HER VEGETABLES.*

Cæsar of Heisterbach, Dist. IX, Cap. IX. Vol. II, pp. 173–74.

On a certain island there was a certain possessed girl, not a nun, whom I myself saw there. When the devil was asked by a priest why he had so long and so cruelly tortured Hartdyfa de Cogheme, he replied through the mouth of the girl. "Why? She has most certainly deserved it. She scattered the Most High upon her vegetables."

Since he did not at all understand the saying, and the devil was unwilling to explain, the priest went to the woman and told her what the devil had said about her, advising her not to deny it, if she understood the saying. She immediately confessed her guilt, saying, "I well understand the saying, although I have never told any man of it. When I was a young girl and had a garden to cultivate, I received a wandering woman as a guest one night. When I told her of my losses in my garden, saying that all the vegetables were being devoured by caterpillars, she replied, 'I will tell you a good remedy. Receive the body of the Lord, break it in pieces, and scatter it upon your vegetables. And the caterpillars will disappear at once.' I, wretched one! who cared more for my garden than for the sacrament, when I received the body of our Lord at Easter, took it out of my mouth and did with it as I had been taught. What I had intended as a remedy for my vegetables, became a source of torment to me, as the devil is my witness."

Novice: "That woman was more cruel than the attendants of Pilate, who spared Jesus after His death, and did break up His bones."

Monk: "Therefore, up to the present day she atones for that heinous sin and suffers unheard of tortures. Let those who employ the divine sacrament for temporal gain, or—what is more execrable—for evil-doing, give heed to this punishment. Also if vermin neglect to do reverence to this sacrament, they sometimes suffer punishment."

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3. *BEES CONSTRUCT A CHURCH FOR THE HOST.*

Étienne de Bourbon, No. 317, pp. 266–67.

For I have heard that a certain rustic, wishing to become wealthy and having many hives of bees, asked certain evil men how he could

get rich and increase the number of his bees. He was told by someone that if he retained the sacred communion on Easter and placed it in some one of his hives, he would entice away all of his neighbor's bees, which leaving their own hives, would come to the place where the body of our Lord was and there would make honey. He did this.

Then all the bees came to the hive where the body of Christ was, and just as if they had felt compassion for the irreverence done to it, by their labor they began to construct a little church and to erect foundations, and bases, and columns, and an altar with like labor. And with the greatest reverence they placed the body of our Lord upon the altar. And within that little bee-hive they formed that little church with wonderful and the most beautiful workmanship. The bees of the vicinity leaving their hives came to that one; and over that work they sang in their own manner certain wonderful melodies like hymns.

The rustic hearing this, wondered. But waiting until the fitting time for collecting the honey, he found nothing in his hives in which the bees had been accustomed to make honey. And finding himself impoverished through the means by which he had expected to be enriched, he went to that one where he had placed the host, where he saw the bees had come together. But when he approached, just as if they had wanted to vindicate the insult to our Saviour, the bees rushed upon the rustic and stung him so severely that he escaped with difficulty, and in great agony. Going to the priest he related all that he had done and what the bees had done.

The priest, by the advice of his bishop, collected his parishioners and made a procession to the place. Then the bees leaving the hive, rose in the air, making sweet melody. Raising the hive they found inside the noble structure of that little church, and the body of our Lord placed upon the altar. Then returning thanks they bore to their own church that little church of the bees constructed with such skill and elegance, and placed it on the altar.

By this deed those, who do not reverence, but offer insult instead to the sacred body of Christ or the sacred place where it is, ought to be put to great confusion.

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